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RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

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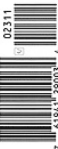
23 Mar '12

suggested for
mature readers

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BUT I WAS TELLING
YOU ABOUT THE
TEENAGE BRAIN...

ABOUT THE THREE THINGS THE
EXPERT ON THE TUBE SAID THE
BRAINS OF YOUNG FOLKS LIKE
ME CAN'T MAKE SENSE OF.

THE FIRST ONE,
LIKE I TOLD YOU
BEFORE, IS DEATH.



THE SECOND THING THAT
THIS EGGHEAD CALLED OUT,
THOUGH--WAS LOVE.

Glendale, California-Now.

NOW, SEE,
THAT THREW
ME A BIT.

STILL, ACCORDING TO THIS MAN, THE
TEENAGE BRAIN IS HOOKED UP TO
WORK ON IMPULSE, ON FAST WANTS,
NOT ON ANYTHING LONG LASTING.

WE SEE WHAT WE WANT
NOW AND THERE'S NOTHING
BEHIND IT, NOTHING DEEPER
THAN THE WINK OF AN EYE
OR THE CURL OF A LIP.

NOW WHAT I'M THINKING IS, THE
VAMPIRE BEHIND THAT WHEEL, MAYBE
HE CAUGHT THE SAME TELEVISION
REPORT I DID. MAYBE HE SAW THAT
SAME EXPERT YAPPING.

BECAUSE HE SEEMS TO THINK
THAT POPPING HIS TRUNK AND
SHOWING ME A PRETTY GIRL, ONE
I USED TO RUN WITH--HE SEEMS
TO THINK THAT'LL DISTRACT ME.
THAT MY TEENAGE BRAIN WILL
FORGET THE LONG TERM AND GO
FOR THE NOW, NOW, NOW.

NOW MAYBE I'M A SPECIAL CASE. MAYBE SOME PEOPLE WOULD SAY MY BRAIN IS ALL SCRAMBLED EGGS ON ACCOUNT OF WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH.

BUT HERE'S A FACT FOR YOU.

THERE ARE THINGS I DO LOVE IN THIS WORLD. THINGS I LOVE IN A LONG-LASTING FASHION.



HE KILLED MY FAMILY.



EVERYONE I EVER LOVED.

AND AT THE TOP OF THAT LIST?

...KILLING VAMPIRES. I'VE BEEN DOING IT FOR LONGER THAN I CARE TO SAY, AND I'M AS GOOD AS IT GETS.

AND THE VAMPIRE BEHIND THE WHEEL OF THAT FAIRLANE, DRAGGING THAT POOR GIRL--WELL, I'VE BEEN CHASING HIM ALL MY LIFE.

BUT OH, MR. VAMPIRE... IF YOU DON'T THINK I CAN SEE PAST SOME GIRL, EVEN A CALIFORNIA FILLY LIKE THAT...



...SEE PAST HER TO ALL THE THINGS I'D LOVE TO DO TO YOU ONCE I CATCH YOU...

...WELL THEN, MR. VAMPIRE...

...YOU'VE GOT A LOT
TO LEARN ABOUT THIS
YOUNG MAN'S BRAIN.

La Jolla Sanatorium. Fifteen years ago.



WE'LL TAKE
GOOD CARE OF
TRAVIS, SISTER
MIRIAM. WE'VE HAD
A LOT OF SUCCESS
WITH CASES
LIKE HIS.



I HOPE SO, DOCTOR. WE'VE DONE
WHAT WE COULD AT THE HOME, BUT
THESE... BELIEFS OF HIS.

DELUSIONS,
SISTER.
PERSISTENT
DELUSIONS.



HE LIVES IN
A WORLD OF
MONSTERS AND
NIGHTMARES.



DON'T
WORRY,
WE'LL TEACH
HIM...

"...THERE'S NO SUCH
THING AS MONSTERS."



COME ON,
COME ON.



VRMMMM



KRASH

NNNGG!





"I CAN DO THIS
DANCE ALL NIGHT."

24 hours ago...



ROCK AND
SOCK...



TO THE
HOP!



ALL NIGHT,
BABY...



FROM
MIDNIGHT
TO...

THUMP









"HE'S
UNRELENTING."



"TOTALLY
UNRELENTING."



"I'VE NEVER
SEEN
ANYTHING
LIKE IT..."



IN THE TWO YEARS HE'S BEEN A PATIENT, THE BOY HAS NEVER WAVED, NOT EVEN FOR A MOMENT, IN HIS DELUSIONS OF DEMONS AND GHOULS AND SUCH.



VAMPIRES.



TO BE FRANK, I'M WORRIED WE'RE HEADED TOWARDS AN OCULAR LOBOTOMY.

OCULAR?

IT'S A NEW PROCEDURE. MUCH LESS INVASIVE. WE CRACK THE EYE SOCKET AND GO IN THROUGH THE MUSCULAR TISSUE WITH AN ORBITOCLAST-- A TOOL LIKE AN ICE-PICK.



YOU COME NEAR ME WITH AN ICE-PICK AND YOU'LL BE NEEDING A DOG OF YOUR OWN, BECAUSE I'LL--



COMBATIVE.

STUBBORN. IN FACT, I'VE COME TO BELIEVE THAT OUR TRAVIS ISN'T ILL AT ALL. JUST A DETERMINED CHILD, IN LOVE WITH HIS OWN ROMANTIC FANTASIES OF MONSTERS.



WHAT VOLTAGE, DOCTORY?

NURSE--
ELECTRO-
CONVULSIVE
THERAPY. THREE
ROUNDS.

"VAMPIRES DON'T SEEM SO ROMANTIC A FANTASY AT FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY VOLTS, DO THEY, TRAVIS?"

PIPER!
DUCK!











TRAVIS,
PLEASE!



HELP!

ALL I HAD TO
DO WAS KEEP
PUSHING. PUSH
THAT FAIRLANE
TIL IT BLEW.

I KNEW IT. THE
VAMP KNEW IT. I'D
HAVE EVERYTHING
I'D WANTED--THE
LONG TERM.



BUT SEE, MAYBE LOVE
AIN'T FOR ME AFTER ALL.



COME
ON!
REACH!



HURRY! HE
CAN'T SEE US
WITH THE
FLAMES!



I'M
TRYING!

IT'S
NOW OR
NEVER!





Death Race

Part III
of Five

HIS
NAME'S
SKINNER
SWEET!

HOWDY!

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AMERICAN VAMPIRE CREATED BY SCOTT SNYDER
AND RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

ON THE

LE DGE

BY Douglas Rushkoff

I always loved the way manga and anime celebrated kids' special relationship to technology. Whether it was Jimmy Sparks controlling Gigantor with a remote control, the Newtypes in the *Gundam* series communicating telepathically, or the children in *Evangelion* who co-evolved with the machines they piloted, these kids had clearly leveled up.

Here in America, on the other hand, it feels like any sign of adaptation to technology is condemned as an illness. If Johnny channel-surfs while playing video games, it means he's got Attention Deficit Disorder: the inability to focus on any one thing for too long. It's supposedly the latest epidemic of the digital age.

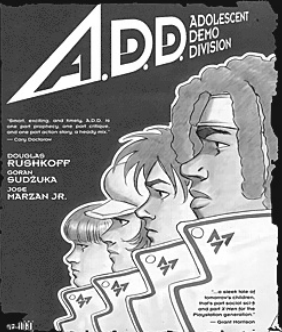
But what if A.D.D. isn't an illness but an adaptation? What if it's really just a defense mechanism in a world where corporate media and marketers are trying to program us everywhere we look? The so-called illness only emerged in the late 1990s, after the computer business magazines all declared that we were living in an "attention economy" where the only marketable commodity would be human "eyeball hours." They used every bit of psychological and neurological data they had on us to make their websites as "sticky" as possible, trapping our gaze, our attention, and hopefully our money.

Maybe the ability to *not* pay attention—to avert the eyes, think of something else, move on, and forget—is akin to a superpower. Why else would Ritalin prescriptions have gone up 4000% in the past 15 years? If the kids won't watch the commercials willingly, we'll just drug them.

That's what gave me the idea to write A.D.D., a graphic novel about a fictional "Adolescent Demo Division" deep within the biggest, baddest media corporation of all time. What if they were raising kids to be video game champions in an apparent media paradise, while actually watching and waiting for these new abilities to develop? What would it be like to be a kid with no parents and no responsibilities other than to play video games? And what if this total media saturation actually *did* change one's brain, one's response time, one's ability to read the world around him?

And what if the corporation that built this whole world had done so solely for the purpose of suppressing this emerging resistance to their total control?

The story in A.D.D. may be fiction, but the war on your mind and against your resistance is as real as the mediaspace in which you live. They mean to occupy your reality before you occupy theirs.



DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF, the media theorist and author, has written a dozen books on technology and culture including *Cyberia*, *Media Virus*, *Life Inc.*, and *Program or Be Programmed*. As a member of the cyberpunk movement and cohort of Timothy Leary and Robert Anton Wilson, he originated the terms "viral media," "screenagers," and "social currency." He has written three award-winning Frontline documentaries: *Merchants of Cool*, *The Persuaders*, and *Digital Nation*, and the comics *ClubZero-G* and *TESTAMENT*.

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